



The Knowle Society

Established to maintain the character of the Village

Minutes of the 41st Annual General Meeting held on 24th November 2003 at the Village Hall.

Present: The Chairman and 68 members.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were received from 9 members.

Amplification system: The Chairman prefaced the Meeting by explaining that a new amplification system was in use for the first time. This included a Loop Hearing Aid system which had been donated by the Society to the Village Hall, from the Eva Wootton Fund.

Minutes of the previous AGM: The Minutes of the AGM held on 25th November 2002 were approved.

Chairman's Report:

The Chairman drew attention to the many activities of the Society during 2003 which had been fully reported in the Newsletters, by the Sub-Committee Chairmen. In particular, he highlighted the Society's contribution to the Parish Church's 600th Anniversary celebrations, including the lecture by Anthony Upton on Walter Cook and the Church Exhibition created by the Local History S/C.

As retiring Chairman, he thanked the S/C Chairmen and all members who had supported him throughout the year and paid particular tribute to John Chaloner and Ken Richards who were relinquishing their S/C Chairmanships. He also thanked the Ward Councillors for their continued support.

Happily, all executive vacancies were already or would shortly be filled, except the Chairman of Meetings and Social S/C. Peter Ellis appealed for a volunteer to take on that office.

Treasurer's Report:

Sandra Lea presented the audited accounts for the year which showed a credit balance of £8229. This reflected a deficit of £750 on the year's workings, which Sandra was able to explain.

The accounts were approved by the Meeting.

Subscriptions:

The Treasurer proposed increases in subscriptions w.e.f. 1st October 2004, to meet anticipated increases in expenditure over the coming years. In proposing the changes, Sandra pointed out that this would be the first increase in over 10 years.

The proposal was £3.00 single membership
 £5.00 family membership
 £10.00 vice-president

After some discussion, in which varied views were expressed, the proposal was overwhelmingly carried with 2 contra votes relating to the increase from £3 to £5 for family membership.

Election of Officers and Executive Committee:

The following elections were made:-

President -	Dr R.J.Bower
Chairman -	C.H.Smith
Deputy - Chairman -	P.L.Ellis
Treasurer -	Mrs S.V.Lea
Secretary -	Ms C.Keeley

Executive Committee Members - Mrs S.E.Jarman, Mrs E.S.Warner, M.J.Brain, J.F.Chaloner, L.T.Jones, G.G.S.Masters, D.L.Mellor.

Appointment of Auditor - Andrew Chadwick

Thanks:

Cllr Kyles, on behalf of the Ward Councillors, thanked the Society for its co-operation with the Council and he and Colin Smith both thanked Peter Ellis for his service as Chairman. Peter acknowledged these sentiments with the comment that his period of office had been three good years.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.50pm.

Notes on reports following the AGM on 24th November 2003

Amenities - Gary Masters

Gary reported that the speed monitors to facilitate traffic calming to 30mph in Browns Lane, Longdon Road, Tilehouse Green Lane and Lady Byron Lane would shortly be enforced by a police presence.

The plans showing proposals for new youth facilities in Jobs Close Park, including a skateboard area, had been changed without further consultation. The Knowle Society had objected to this. Although some local residents had taken part in an initial consultation a group from Starbold Crescent nearer to the site of the proposed skateboard area, had had discussions and although it was stated that they were not anti-development or against youth facilities they did not approve of the skateboard area so close to their properties. The main reasons given were vandalism, drunkenness, and poor behaviour already observed in close proximity to this area. A group had been formed called Friends of Knowle Park. A spokesperson said that 90% of 350 residents consulted from Starbold Crescent did not support the current plans. He asked for support from the Knowle Society and their comments. The matron of Jobs Close also stated that the new proposal was not safe for the elderly residents and a spokesperson from the allotments reiterated that vandalism had also occurred at their site. Gary stated on behalf of the Society that it was in favour of youth facilities but that it did not have to include a skateboard area. Solihull Council, local residents and ROSPA had been asked to attend the area on November 25th to assess the safety. Councillor Blake assured the meeting that nothing would be decided without full consultation with all parties and a debate would take place at Arden School after more consultations, a needs analysis and ideally a bigger resident survey.

History – Read by Colin Smith for Elaine Warner who was unable to attend.

Attention was drawn to the Soden's exhibition in the library soon to be taken down. This is to be replaced by a Maddocks exhibition in December 2003.

Planning – Ken Richards

Redrow development approved for 24 apartments, following an Inspectors decision. Parkridge, refused 78 dwellings and may have to activate plans for 42 which have been approved or go to appeal.

Pathfinder - David Bower

This was an initiative from the Civic Trust to encourage the society to look at development as well as conservation. St Johns Close was chosen as a project and after an initial meeting on 2nd October a number of recommendations were proposed. These include one way systems around the green, parking restrictions and walkway linkage to some shops. Before the proposals are presented to the Council members are invited to comment after the next newsletter.

Social Events – Sandra Lea

Sandra reported on a year of successful social events including a quiz team of Society members that won an event at the Royal British Legion. Future plans were outlined.

Walks – Leighton Jones

Leighton reported on enjoyable walks in 2003 and outlined plans already in hand for 2004.

Nature Conservation – Stella Jarman

The black poplar project had failed because of the summer heat wave. The trees did not survive the water shortage.

It had been agreed that the Britain in Bloom invitation needed further discussion especially on manpower and finance.

A celebration of 30years of the Nature Conservation sub committee took place at the Red Lion in Knowle.

The plane trees along the Warwick Road have become unsafe and the Council want to take them down. Red oak had been suggested as a replacement but Stella informed the meeting that these are not a native tree and therefore not appropriate for this historic avenue. A better species would be hornbeam or small leaf lime. The proposal was challenged saying that all the trees needed was proper pruning. The council representative replied that they would wait for agreement by all parties on requirements in consultation with tree experts before making a decision.

Web Site – David Bower

David encouraged members to use the web site on www.knowlesociety.org.uk for details of meetings etc. Also on the specific history of Knowle there is now an index of records.

22/11/04

Do. H. Smith